

SPECIAL OPERATION FORCES COMMAND AND CONTROL STRUCTURE IN
THE COLOMBIA POST-CONFLICT

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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
General Studies

by

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2016

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ABSTRACT

SPECIAL OPERATION FORCES COMMAND AND CONTROL STRUCTURE IN THE COLOMBIA POST-CONFLICT, by MAJ Jorge A. Medina, 64 pages

The author studied the possibility for the modification of the current command and control structure of USSOF in Colombia. This research studied if the command and control structure needs to be rearranged to combat more efficiently the expected transnational organized crime groups in the Andean Region, especially after the FARC and the Colombian government reach a peace accord. This hypothesis was based on the previous experience of the demobilization of the paramilitaries during the Alvaro Uribe presidency. On that specific case, some of the demobilized paramilitaries turned into criminal bands that combined with narco-trafficker presented a broader criminal problem for Colombia. The researcher believes through his investigation that a more influencing command structure is needed in the Andean Ridge Region to address the demobilization process and the possible outcome. This structure needs to be able to coordinate with the US Embassy in Colombia as well as the Colombian Government, especially the Minister of Defense to address the multiple issues that can arise.

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ACRONYMS

AO	Area of Operations
AOR	Area of Responsibility
BACRIM	Criminal Bands in English
CENTCOM	Central Command
DOD	Department of Defense
DOS	Department of State
FARC	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia
FID	Foreign Internal Defense
JCET	Joint Combined Exercise Training
JIIM	Joint Interagency International Multinational
MISO	Military Information Support Operations
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
SC	Security Cooperation
SCA	Support to Civil Administration
SF	Special Forces
SFA	Security Force Assistance
USSOUTHCOM	United States Southern Command
SOC SOUTH	Special Operations Command South
TSOC	Theater Special Operations Center
USASOC	US Special Operation Command
USSOF	United States Special Operations Forces

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

We applaud President Santos and his negotiating team for their efforts to reach a just and lasting peace with the FARC. We are hopeful the parties will soon conclude a final agreement to end this terrible war. The Colombian people deserve a just and durable peace, and this will be their victory.

I have called President Santos to congratulate him and his negotiating team for their courage and commitment to the peace talks under extraordinarily difficult conditions. The President and I have met on several occasions since the talks began, and we speak regularly by phone. I have also met twice with Colombian government negotiators.

Last December, in Bogota, President Santos asked whether the United States would support this process by appointing a Special Envoy. President Obama and I agreed, so we appointed former Assistant Secretary of State Bernard Aronson, who has been deeply involved every step of the way, including in the most recent round in Cuba last week. He will continue to stay closely engaged in this process.¹

— John Kerry, Secretary of State

Problem Statement

During the last fifty years, the “Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP)” or Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – Army of the People, throughout the Andean Ridge Region has been a problem posing a threat not only to the democratic institutions of Colombia but also to the interests of the United States throughout South American continent. The illegal drug trade and the violence perpetrated by both sides during the last fifty years presented security and stability challenges requiring non-conventional approaches, since 2012, the Government of

¹ Department of State, “Colombia Peace Process,” September 23, 2015, accessed March 21, 2016, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2015/09/247229.htm>.

Colombia started peace negotiations with the FARC-EP facilitated by the Raul Castro's Government in La Habana, Cuba. The Colombian Government had the hope of reaching the peace treaty ending the conflict and achieving the peace that the region wish for.

The researcher believes the peace agreements will bring new difficulties needing a more robust multi-sector or the whole of government approach. In the rural municipalities of Colombia, like for example La Macarena, San Vicente del Caguan and La Uribe the local government institutions are undeveloped and legal jobs are barely existent. These conditions leave these populations to the mercy of non-state actors like the "Bandas Criminales" or BACRIM (Criminal Bands in English). The factors of weak institutions and lack of jobs is setting the conditions for a BACRIM or other unlawful organization to take roots in these vulnerable population. In order to destroy the remnants of BACRIMs the perceived, populations' grievances need to be addressed by the Colombian Government. On the United States side, the United States could strengthen its Special Operations support, possibly merging current U.S. Policy with the new Colombian National Security or post Colombian Peace treaty. This comprehensive approach requires the Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, Multinational (JIIM) partner's efforts focusing on developing, demobilization, disarming and re-integration of "former" guerrillas into the Colombian Society. The researcher believes that a strong institutional capacity in the security and the civil sector will ease the burden that might be ahead.

United States Special Operations Forces (USSOF) continue to partner with the Colombian Security Forces which has developed sufficient capacity and legitimacy to counter FARC-EP and BACRIM based on the author's experience. Currently, the

Colombia Government is negotiating peace with the FARC. This new opportunity presents unique diplomatic and security challenges, but with a flexible policy employed by the US Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM), through the Special Operations Command South (SOCSOUTH), the Colombians can “secure the victory” and neutralize the remnants of illegal armed groups in their national territory.

The research will attempt to describe the strategic context and operational environment in Colombia, USSOF and its components like Civil Affairs (CA), Military Information Operations (MISO), and Special Forces (SF). USSOF has partnered with the Colombian Security Forces at the strategic and operational levels in a continuous attempt to further develop their capacity to counter the current problem.

Primary Research Question

Should the current command and control structure of USSOF be rearranged to combat transnational organized crime groups in the Andean Region more effectively, especially after the FARC and the Colombian government reach a peace accord?

Secondary Research Questions

1. Must the US-Colombia military engagement agreements be modified?
2. What lessons learned in Colombia can be applied to the next phase?
3. Should USSOF partner with the Colombian Joint Chief of Staff or, who should the USSOF partner with?
4. What would be the right combination of USSOF between CA, MISO, and SF to address the new expected problems?

Assumptions

There are five main assumptions the author takes into consideration. First, illicit trafficking poses a threat to the political stability of Colombia and its neighbors. Second, does well-resourced organized crime groups move drugs, weapons, money, and people on these networks which threaten security, undermines fundamental human rights, cripples the rule of law through corruption, erodes good governance, and hinders economic development?² Third, transnational organized crime is not the only a problem for the security forces to counter. Fourth, some FARC members who initially joined for ideology now want to be reinstated into the Colombian Society. Fifth and finally, Colombia continues to allocate the same amount of resources to neutralize the transnational organized crime syndicates operating within their borders after peace agreements are signed.

Limitations

There are four constraints in this thesis, first, there are no economic resources for the researcher to collect data from the primary information sources in Colombia. Second, the illegal nature of the FARC limits the collection of data from the point of view of the narco-terrorist organization. Third, the majority of USSOF information is classified. Fourth, there is limited material published on the operational approach and the USSOF command and control structure. Therefore, the research will be based on articles, books, and case studies from the years 2000s to the present.

² US Southern Command, "Multinational Operation Targets Transnational Organized Crime," February 9, 2012, accessed May 9, 2016, <http://www.southcom.mil/newsroom/Pages/Multinational-Operation-Targets-Transnational-Organized-Crime.aspx>.

Delimitations

This research will be limited to the year 2000 through the present. During this period, the U.S. Government and Colombia implemented Plan Colombia, which the Colombian Government made significant gains against the FARC with the advice and assistance of USSOF. The research will not study other U.S. military forces in the region including the U.S. Military Group or other efforts carried by the U.S. National Guard, U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Navy. The research will examine potential civilian implementing partners, which include those currently working with the US Department of State.

Importance of the Research

This research will provide the US Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM), US Special Operations Command South (SOCSOUTH), the 95th Civil Affairs Brigade (Airborne), and the U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) with recommendations on how to approach these new challenges. The research will add understanding of the situation and will explore ways to approach the problem, including modifying the command structure of the special operations. One of the purposes is also to influence in the more contemporary training programs, perhaps joint and multinational exercises, and more USSOF integration between its components like CA, MISO, and SF. This study is paramount to the USSOF strategy in the dynamic strategic and operational environments that we are facing in the hemisphere.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

National Security Documents

This section of the investigation covers several documents including the U.S. National Security Strategy; U.S. doctrine; public U.S. policy towards South America; and other scholarly manuscripts. The literature review will address the research question, should the current command and control structure of USSOF be rearranged to more effectively combat the transnational organized crime groups in the Andean Region?

The current U.S. National Security Strategy, published in February 2015, continues to emphasize extremism combined with a terrorist threat as a persistent risk to the United States and its allies. The strategy tells us to follow a workable approach that prioritizes targeted counterterrorism operations, use a collective action with our partners, and increased efforts to prevent the growth of violent extremism and radicalization that drives increased threats.³ The National Security Strategy provides a vision for strengthening and sustaining American leadership, purpose, and aims to advance the interests and values from a position of strength.⁴ “The United States will deter and defeat any adversary that threatens the national security and of our allies.”⁵

³ White House, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, 2015), 9, accessed December 2, 2015, https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015_national_security_strategy.pdf.soc.mil.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

There are some states in the Western Hemisphere working in conjunction with the USSOF and other agencies to mitigate any circumstances or factors, which could provide a sanctuary or refuge to any of these groups. In Colombia and Peru, the FARC and Shining Path, who operate in the jungles of the Amazons, continue to threaten the sovereignty of Colombia and Peru respectively. The U.S. through its USSOF has been advising these two governments on how to contain the threat and defeat these insurgent groups.

The National Military Strategy, published in June 2015, stated terrorism is a tactic that violent extremist organizations (VEO) use to advance their interests.⁶ It also describes how the military forces will be employed to protect and promote the national interests. The nation must be able to adapt to new threats while maintaining a comparative advantage over traditional ones. This document mentioned the best ways to counter VEOs is to strengthen the security forces of host nation forces. In the Andean Region, the United States continues to be engaged in order to maintain the stability through the projection of power to dissuade transnational organized crime.

The Quadrennial Defense Review published in 2014 states that one of the priorities for the U.S. is to “build security globally, in order to preserve regional stability, deter adversaries, support allies and partners, and cooperate with others to address common security challenges.”⁷ Colombian Security Forces have been benefiting from the

⁶ Joint Chief of Staff, *The National Military Strategy of 2015*, accessed September 5, 2015, http://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Publications/2015_National_Military_Strategy.pdf.

⁷ Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), accessed September 5, 2015, http://archive.defense.gov/pubs/2014_Quadrennial_Defense_Review.pdf; US Southern Command, “Building

current U.S. - Colombia military relationship. This relationship yielded benefits in the effort to disrupt FARC activities through Colombia.

The Western Hemisphere Defense Policy Statement states that training and educating defense officials are two of the most significant opportunities available to the United States and the partner nations to enhance security.⁸ The Joint Combined Exercises are one the best tools used to enhance the host nation security capacity and increase the U.S. ability to deter any VEO (violent extremist organizations), while subsequently protecting the U.S. Interests.

Security cooperation is defined in the Field Manual 3-22, dated June 2013, as interactions of the U.S. Department of Defense units with foreign defense units in order to build a relationship, subsequently promoting the U.S. interest, develop a friendly capability for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide forces with access to a host nation.⁹

The USSOUTHCOM Commander, General Kelly, stated in his annual Posture Statement stated that SOCSOUTH deployed elements to Colombia and partnered with key units to improve Colombia's civil affairs (CA), Military Information Support

Partner Capacity, Supporting Our Partners," accessed March 10, 2016, <http://www.southcom.mil/ourmissions/Pages/Supporting-Our-Partners--Building-Partner-Nation-Capacity.aspx>.

⁸ Department of Defense, *Western Hemisphere Defense Policy Statement* (Fort Benning, GA: Government Printing Office, 2012), accessed September 5, 2015, <http://archive.defense.gov/news/WHDPS-English.pdf>.

⁹ Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-22, *Army Support to Security Cooperation* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2013), accessed October 5, 2015, <https://armypubs.us.army.mil/doctrine/index.html>.

Operations (MISO), and intelligence capabilities.¹⁰ Thus, Colombia improved its capacity to mitigate vulnerabilities exploited by illegal armed groups. SOCSOUTH used episodic engagements including Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) with their partners to develop and expand partner nation capacity.

Lessons Learned

In the USSOCOM Publication 1, *Persistent Engagement in Colombia* dated July 2014, a monograph that can be found at <https://jsou.socom.mil>, analyzed the USSOF assistance to Colombia in counter narcotics and counterinsurgency operations. The Colombia case is widely used as an example of USSOF engagement plan success. The authors examined the details of this accomplishment as they mentioned, it had not been studied before or published in an academic publication. The researcher believes that these authors, Dr. Mark Moyar, Brigadier General (Retired) Héctor E. Pagán, and Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Wil R. Griego, are the most qualified individuals to analyze this topic. The lessons learned through this publication can be applied to Peru; the Colombian Security Forces can convey them. The authors attribute the success to the investment in the development of people over the decades through the different programs authorized by the United States Congress.¹¹ This manuscript explained how USSOF engagement with the Colombian Security Forces developed the Colombian Security Forces capabilities. The most notable measurement of success is what is seen today, on how the FARC is

¹⁰ U.S Congress, *Posture Statement of General John F. Kelly*, accessed October 19, 2015, http://www.southcom.mil/newsroom/Documents/SOUTHCOM_POSTURE_STATEMENT_FINAL_2015.pdf.

¹¹ Dr. Mark Moyar, Héctor Pagán, and Will R. Griego, *Persistent Engagement in Colombia* (Tampa, FL: JSOU Press, 2014), 1-6.

negotiating a peace treaty with the Colombia Government in Havana, Cuba. This investigation will explore the lessons learned and will make recommendations based on the success obtained by such strategy. This document will be the pillar of the research.

Publication by National Defense University titled “Lessons from Colombia’s Road to Recovery, 1982–2010” gave a range of lessons learned by the Colombian Government in the fight against the terrorist group, FARC. “During Alvaro Uribe’s first term as President many considered Colombia to be a failed state.”¹² The publication mentioned five factors that assisted Colombia in their success. First, was leadership, second, the political consensus within the Colombian Congress and the third was the Institutional Strength exhibited by the government. The fourth factor is the United States assistance in which the USSOF are the protagonist, provided training and guidance, thus professionalizing the Colombian Armed Forces. Fifth, the inability of armed opponents to adapt to the efficiency of the Colombian Security Forces. This way the FARC stayed off balance, providing a space for the Colombian Security Forces to seize, exploit, and retain the initiative forcing the FARC to the negotiating table.¹³

The U.S. served as a significant contributor to the building of the Colombian institutions. During this research, the readers will see that similar fundamentals can be applied to Peru. These two countries share more than a border; they have similar problems in security and in government institutions.

¹² David E. Spencer, “Lessons from Colombia’s Road to Recovery, 1982–2010,” Occasional Papers, December 2013, accessed May 1, 2016, <http://chds.dodlive.mil/files/2013/12/pub-OP-spencer.pdf>.

¹³ Ibid.

What is an Insurgency?

Joint Publication 3-24 dated November 2013, defines what is an insurgency; it also explains the fundamentals of counterinsurgency, an overview of counterinsurgency operations (COIN), planning, execution, assessing, and transition. The purpose of this manual was to fill the gap in doctrine as well as the U.S. Army Field Manual 3-24 dated June 2014. The publication provides guidance and describes the authorities of the Combatant Commanders during counter insurgency operations which occur in a complex operational environment due to the requirements needed to defeat the insurgency.

The Joint Publication 3-24 dated June 2014 defines insurgency as the organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify, or challenge control of a region.¹⁴ Moreover, the publication mentions that an insurgency is a struggle for some form of political power, whether that power is sought through reform, revolution, secession, nullification, or resistance,¹⁵ this way seeking political power as their end. Joint Publication 3-24 also explains approaches to the fight an insurgency in doctrinal terms, as counterinsurgency operations. This manual provides a blueprint to be implemented through the duration of the campaign. The necessity of using a unified or “whole of government” approach between the Department of Defense and Department of State is paramount. One of the most important topics expressed in this book is the necessity for the host nation to address the causes or grievances that spark the insurgency movement.

¹⁴ Joint Chief of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2013), accessed October 29, 2015, http://dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp3_24.pdf.

¹⁵ Ibid.

In other words, to address the roots of potential problems before they threaten legitimate government establishment.

A manuscript published by the United States Marine Corps titled “A guide to the Analysis of Insurgency” defines the insurgency as “a protracted political-military struggle directed toward subverting or displacing the legitimacy of a government or occupying power and completely or partially controlling the resources of a territory through the use of irregular forces and illegal political organizations.”¹⁶ The book also mentioned the common denominator, which is the population.¹⁷ The Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso in Spanish) like their “peers” in the north, the FARC, and they have relied heavily on the population to conduct their operations. FARC relies on the same technique using the population in the rural areas of Colombia to conduct their illicit activities. As a part of the analysis, the insurgencies are categorized. “A Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency (2012)”¹⁸ mentioned five categories.

These categories are based on their goals. The categories are:

1. Revolutionary insurgencies seek to replace the existing government with an entirely different system, often entailing the transformation of the economy and society.

¹⁶ United States Marine Corps, *A Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency* (U.S. Government, 2012), accessed November, 11 2015, <http://www.mccdc.marines.mil/Portals/172/Docs/SWCIWID/COIN/Doctrine/GuidetotheAnalysisofCounterinsurgency.pdf>.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

2. Reformist insurgencies do not want to change the current government, instead seek to compel the administration to alter its policies for reforms.
3. Separatist insurgencies seek independence for a specific region.
4. Resistance insurgencies wants the occupying force to leave.
5. Commercialist insurgencies are motivated by money and resources; politics are simply a tool for seizing the wealth.

Another way to categorize the insurgencies is the type of organization they constitute. They are either political, militarily or traditional by ethic, clan or urban cellular.¹⁹ FARC and Sendero Luminoso may fit in more than one category, thus making perhaps a hybrid organization. A hybrid threat is defined as a “threat that is diverse and a dynamic combination of regular forces, irregular forces, and or criminal elements all unified to achieve mutually benefitting effects.”²⁰ FARC and Sendero Luminoso links to the illicit trafficking for financing their operations constitute a threat to the stability of the Andean Region. This was echoed in a statement made on July 2, 2014, by DEA Administrator, Michele M. Leonhart:

For decades, the Shining Path has fueled terror, addiction and instability across the globe using the proceeds of their drug trafficking. This investigation and our ongoing global efforts reflect DEA’s unwavering commitment to protecting our citizens from these violent and brutal narco-terror organizations. The DEA, along

¹⁹ United States Marine Corps, *A Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency*.

²⁰ Department of the Army, Training Circular 7-0, *Hybrid Threat* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2010), accessed November 1, 2015, <http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/>.

with our outstanding Peruvian law enforcement counterparts, will continue to attack this terrorist organization until they are completely dismantled.²¹

Command and Control

The Joint Publication 1, Doctrine for the Armed Forces, dated March 201, provides guidance for the unified actions of the forces. This document shows the authorized command structures and its responsibilities, and the authority for the command and control. Moreover provides guidance for interagency coordination, and multinational operations.²²

The manual expressed the command

is central to all military action, and unity of command is central to unity of effort. Inherent in command is the authority that a military commander lawfully exercises over subordinates including authority to assign missions and accountability for their successful completion. Although commanders may delegate authority to accomplish missions, they may not absolve themselves of the responsibility for the attainment of these missions. The publication says that unity of command means all forces operate under a single commander with the legal authority to employ all forces in pursuit of a common purpose.²³

The relations of authority to perform functions of command over assigned forces involving organizing, employing and giving orders in all aspects of the military operations, and logistics, necessary to accomplish the missions assigned to the command.²⁴ The relationship is categorized based on the authority of execution and

²¹ Department of Justice, "DEA and US Attorney Announce Charges against Three Leaders of Peruvian Terrorist Organization Shining Path," July 2, 2014, accessed November 1, 2015, <http://www.dea.gov/divisions/hq/2014/hq070214a.shtml>.

²² Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2013), accessed May 3, 2016, [http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp1.pdf#search="JP 1-0"](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp1.pdf#search='JP 1-0').

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

organization, see figure in the next page. Some of the authorities are specific to the combatant commanders and other to its subordinates.

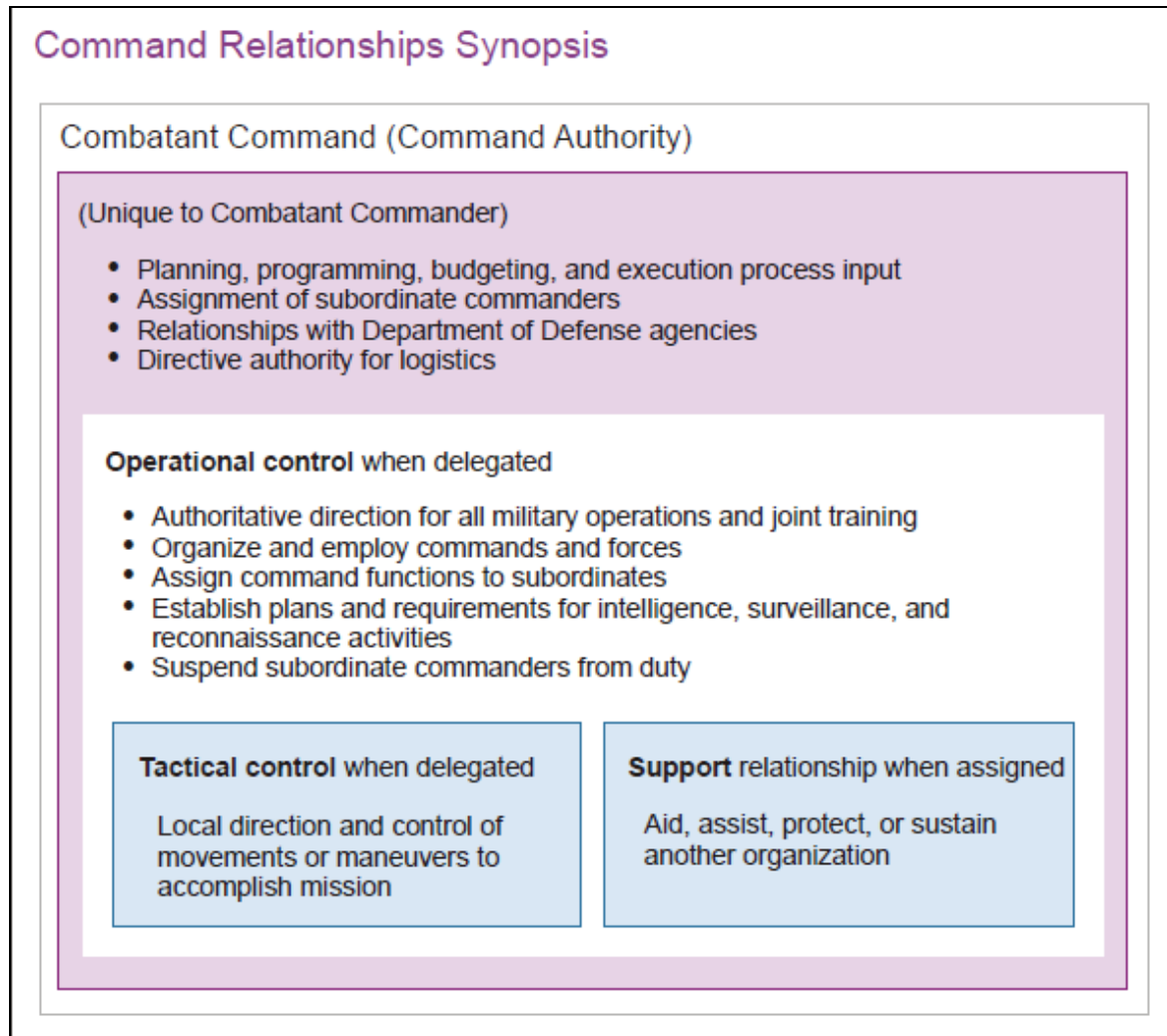


Figure 1. Command Relationship

Source: Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2013), accessed May 3, 2016. [http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp1.pdf#search="JP 1-0"](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp1.pdf#search='JP 1-0'), V-2.

Other Scholarly Investigations about USSOF Command and Control Structures

Since the attacks in 2001 the USSOF has been playing a significant role in combating the new emerging threats. “They have been the most cost-effective tool in the military arsenal to neutralize any real and emerging perils across the globe.”²⁵ “This force has been a significant strategic advantage to the nation.”²⁶ “The relevance in USSOF for maintaining alliances, building partner nation capacity, and developing capabilities never has been greater.”²⁷

In South America, the Special Operations Command South (SOC SOUTH) has been the lead organization in special operations. SOC SOUTH carries out missions throughout South America to achieve strategic objectives in support of the Commander of the United States Southern Command.²⁸ To accomplish what is asked by the nation, the USSOF has been a flexible and adaptable organization in their structure, more important their command structure.

Major Scott Harris, United States Army, (February 8, 2000) wrote that due to the increase of non-traditional missions the nation is facing, commanders will be required to form a unique structure to address the new emerging threats. Major Harris as a visionary

²⁵ US Army John F. Kennedy Warfare Center and School, *ARSOF Operating Concept 2022* (Ft Bragg, NC: United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School), accessed January 22, 2016, <http://www.soc.mil/Assorted%20Pages/ARSOF%20Operating%20Concept%202014.pdf>.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Special Operation Command South, “Special Operations Command South Mission,” accessed November 15, 2015, <http://www.socso.southcom.mil/sites/socsouth/Pages/mission.aspx>.

started to see the need for a new command structure to maximize the United States capabilities while minimizing mismanagement, in a time of shrinking forces and expanding missions - especially in Special Operations.²⁹ We have to take into consideration that this paper was written before the events of September 11, 2001, and already the professionals at arms already were looking into the future. As the manuscript mentioned in its conclusion, that “the United States military is faced with a plethora of new and evolving missions. All of our services have a great deal to offer the smaller force confronted with new challenges.”³⁰

Similar, Major Denis P. Doty, United States Airforce (February 3, 2003) wrote “The establishment of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) in the late 1980’s created a single command designed to correct serious deficiencies in the ability of the United States to conduct special operations and engage in low-intensity conflict. Among other things, the creation of USSOCOM intended to correct problems associated with the command and control of Special Operations Forces (SOF). However, these command and control problems still exist today.”³¹ Major Doty exposed in his manuscript that the use of a blend of doctrine and improvised, hasty structures of the Command and Control for the Special Operations in any low-level conflict, is the right combination to counter the new threats. The always “adaptable enemy” is the only

²⁹ Scott A. Harris, Major, United States Army, “Command, Control and Integration of Special Operations Forces into the General Purpose Force” (Master Thesis Naval War College, 2000), 1-10.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Major Dennis P. Doty, “Command and Control of Special Operations Forces for 21st Century” (Paper, Naval War College, Newport, RI, 2003), accessed March 21, 2016, <http://oai.dtic.mil/oai/oai?verb=getRecord&metadataPrefix=html&identifie>.

denominator in every continent, always presenting a challenge to every command. MAJ Doty said that the problem of command exists today. The researcher, through this study, attempted to establish if the problem still exists and what modification need to occur.

“United States’ secure, peaceful world was shattered by the hands of a new enemy—terrorism. Military forces jumped into action against this adversary not only in Afghanistan but countries all around the world.”³² “The new threat and its asymmetric form of warfare have forced an exponential increase to the ongoing military transformation.”³³ The sentences above were extracted from a manuscript written in 2004 by Lieutenant Colonel Skelton from the United States Air Force. In the manuscript, LTC Skelton argues that a transformation needs to occur through the USSOF command structure to be able to carry the global campaign against terrorism started in 2001.³⁴ The researcher agrees to the extent that command structures need to be flexible and adaptable to the threat. Countering of hybrid threats, in which our enemies are neither a state nor just a group with interests, is the future. In the conclusion of his work LTC Skelton mentioned that “Transforming the organizational architecture from top to bottom will afford USSOCOM the versatility to operate from the front lines.”³⁵

³² Ralph H. Groover, “Transforming the Command and Control Structure of the United States Special Operations Command to Prosecute the Global War on Terrorism” (Strategic Research Project, United States Army War College, Carlisle, PA, 2004), accessed December 10, 2015, <http://www.dtic.mil/docs/citations/ada423693>.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

In his book Mr. Brian S. Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small*, the application of Operational Art by Special Operations in Phase Zero, describes how the United States of America doesn't have a grand strategy.³⁶ He mentioned that today we have competing strategies, and the most reliable surrogate, as expressed by Mr. Petit is the engagement.³⁷

The engagement is conducted all the levels of projecting power, for example, Diplomatic, Military, Economic and in the Information fields. This way the United States can project its power, capacity and intent without any provocation. During this study, the author examined the engagements in Colombia in which the USSOF has been heavily engaged since the 1990s. Plan Colombia that started in 1998 was a major "operation" in which the USSOF intervened in Colombia in all aspects of the defense sector. Since the USSOF has been in the Colombia advising and assisting the Colombian Government be stable and remain a power in the Andean Region.

The Red Book of Guerrilla Warfare

In the book, Mao Zedong describes what is guerrilla warfare, relationships, coordination, establishments, etc. The most important piece is the relationship of an insurgency using guerrilla tactics to the population. Mao explains without political objectives; the guerrilla movement will fail.³⁸ Moreover, the political objectives need to be aligned with the interest of the population that support the movement. We see this in

³⁶ Brian S. Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small, The application of Operational Art by Special Operations in Phase Zero* (Denver, CO: Outskirts Press, 2013), 120-136.

³⁷ Ibid., 137-165.

³⁸ Mao Zedong, *The Red Book of Guerrilla Warfare* (El Paso, TX: EL Norte Press, 2010), 45-50.

the FARC, a movement started with the masses in the mountains of Colombia in reaction to the violence of ultra-right wing paramilitaries.³⁹ They are the armed-wing of the “Partido Comunista Colombiano” (the Colombian Communist Party in English), later to be the “Partido Comunista Colombiano Clandestino” (PCCC) (the Clandestine Colombian Communist Party). Today the FARC continue to maintain the political aspirations for power claiming the support of the populations in the countryside of Colombia. During the peace negotiations in Cuba, the FARC has been publishing books online in an effort to educate the population about their origins and struggles.

Marulanda and the FARC for Beginners

In the book *Marulanda and the FARC for Beginners*,⁴⁰ the FARC epitomize this manuscript as an instrument that will educate the people of Colombian in their war against the Colombian establishment. The book shows a different side of the conflict that most of the people did not have an opportunity to see. The FARC claimed to be a Marxist movement in favor of a better life for the country, also using the guerrilla tactics de Mao. On the common denominator that the FARC has with other insurgents is the use of the populations. Through the book, is shown the extensive use of songs, poetry, and other cultural venues to create their own culture. The Colombian government and the FARC continuously fight for political power in the human domain called population. This book

³⁹ Manuel Marulanda Vélez, *Cuadernos de Campaña* (Colombia, South América: The FARC, 1973), 4-33.

⁴⁰ Emilio Salgari, “Marulanda and the FARC for Beginners,” accessed March 21, 2016, <http://farc-epeace.org/index.php/component/k2/item/292-marulanda-for-beginners/292-marulanda-for-beginners.html>.

definitely represents the effort made by the FARC to illustrate their point of view to the population.

The Past as a Prologue? A History of U.S. Counter Insurgency Policy
in Colombia 1958-1966

In this manuscript published by the U.S. Army Strategic Institute describe the foreign policy and its implementation in Colombia. The author Dennis M. Rempe depicted the history of the counter insurgency strategy, the survey teams, and their recommendations.⁴¹ This book mentioned lessons learned, it lets us know what the United States had done in the past. The most intriguing topics that the book mentioned is the solution to an insurgency is not a military only solution.⁴² For counterinsurgency operations, a whole of government approach is needed. In the peace process, we have seen this, the Colombian have different approaches to the FARC. Military, demobilization and civic assistance to the communities in which the FARC flourished. To an extent the Colombian Government has learned from the past, but we are looking to a new future. If the peace negotiation flourish and an accord are signed the United States and Colombian Governments will be looking to a future with new challenges. For this, the Special Operations need to be prepared and revise their command and control structure in the Andean Region.

⁴¹ Dennis M. Rempe, “The Past as Prologue a History of U S Counterinsurgency” (Report, The Strategic Institute, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA, 2002), accessed March 21, 2016, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub17.pdf>.

⁴² Ibid.

Criticisms Associated With Operation Anaconda:
Can Long Distance Leadership Be Effective?

Through this manuscript the author explain that Operations Anaconda was effective in achieving its goals, the planning and execution had error.⁴³ This operation shown mistakes made and provide lessons for the future of the command and control. The manuscript explain that the CENTCOM command and control structures through the operations was not clear, and confused the subordinate commanders.⁴⁴ It mentioned General Franks was leading the operations from his headquarters in Tampa, Florida, that is in a different time zone and opposite schedule.⁴⁵ When night is in Afghanistan, in Tampa Florida is day. The author, LCDR Todd Marzano, called this long distance leadership.⁴⁶

A Great Perhaps? Colombia: Conflict and Convergence

This book explain and show the causes of conflicts through four experts in the South America conflict. This book is a study of the history of the conflict with the FARC-EP. In the manuscript is narrated how the Colombian Government took ownership

⁴³ LCDR Toted Marzano, "Criticisms Associated with Operation Anaconda: Can Long Distance Leadership be Effective?" (Paper, Naval War College, Newport, RI, 2006), accessed May 3, 2016, <http://oai.dtic.mil/oai/oai?verb=getRecord&metadataPrefix=html&identifier=ADA463654>.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

of the problem, developed and implemented a strategy.⁴⁷ Also its show a “road” on how with the correct and necessary foreign support a country can defeat insurgencies, mitigate grievances and preserve their sovereignty.

⁴⁷ Dickie Davis, David Kilcullen, Greg Mills, and David E. Spencer, *Great Perhaps? Colombia: Conflict and Convergence* (London: Hurst and Company, 2016), xxi-xxiii.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The objective of this research is to analyze if the current organizational structure of United States Special Operations Forces in order to determine if it needs to be rearranged to more effectively assist Colombia; after the peace agreements are signed; and combat the transnational organized crime groups in the Andean Region. In the opening remarks to this study, the investigator presented information and formed four secondary research questions that this study should respond to. The second chapter recapitulates the definition, classifications, and origins of the insurgents' organizations. Additionally, it explains the influence of insurgency and the ways to combat them; the development of FARC in Colombia; the paradigms for managing the insurgents' groups; and the current Command and Control Structure of the USSOF. Finally, this chapter explains case study research, the type that is used, and the primary procedures for to collect the data.

Case Study Research

This study used the case study research design. Hancock and Algozzine in their book *Doing Case Study Research* established that a case study.

means conducting an empirical investigation of a contemporary phenomena within its natural context using multiple sources of evidence. The topics of case study research vary widely. For example, case studies of programs, events, persons, processes, institutions, social groups, and other contemporary phenomena have been completed.

In fact, researchers from many disciplines and many paradigms (qualitative and quantitative) call their work case study research, and they generally agree on several important characteristics that define it.

First, case study research typically focuses on an individual representative of a group, an organization or organizations or a phenomena (e.g., a particular event, situation, program, or activity).

Second, the phenomena being researched is studied in its natural context, bounded by space and time.

Third, case study research is richly descriptive because it is grounded in deep and varied sources of information.

Additional similarities and differences sometimes found in other forms of research also characterize case study research.

In addition to their disciplinary orientation, case study research designs may be classified as intrinsic, instrumental, or collective. Researchers engage in intrinsic case study research when they want to know more about a particular individual, group, event or organization. Researchers conducting an intrinsic case study are not necessarily interested in examining or creating general theories or in generalizing their findings to broader populations.

The primary goal of an instrumental case study research design is to better understand a theoretical question or problem. When this approach is used, enhanced understanding of the particular issue being examined is of secondary importance to a greater insight into the theoretical explanation that underpins the issue.

Finally, collective case study research attempts to address an issue while also adding to the literature base that helps to a better conceptualization of a theory.

For this investigation, a qualitative case study comparison methodology was used to answer the research question. During the investigation, the USSOF intervention in Colombia will be analyzed.

The research method was elected because the USSOF mostly use effects related to human behavior as measurements of effectiveness, therefore to acquire quantitative data takes a lot of time and resources, both were not available. This investigation used the case study research design explain by Hancock and Algozzine explain in their book “Doing

Case Study Research”, in which is established that a “case study means conducting an empirical investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its natural context using multiple sources of evidence.”⁴⁸

Based on the previous premise there is not enough data to conduct a quantitative analysis. The case studies allowed the investigator a detailed examination of the USSOF Command and Control structure. The research was divided first, into research of all pertinent documents regarding the FARC, Colombian Peace Process and USSOF then verification of the collected data, and confirmation with SOF units deployed to Colombia, finally examination and comparison of the information.

The author described lessons learned from Plan Colombia, Colombia Strategic Development Initiative and the Colombian Peace Process. The investigation looked into the application of USSOF in Colombia and what have been learned, moreover how to implement the success attained. In regards to the Colombian Security Forces, the investigation looked at U.S. policy towards those respective countries, the differences in approach towards illicit trafficking; approaches towards terrorism; and U.S. contribution to building host nation capacity. The researcher used the access to SOCSOUTH and United States Army Special Operations Command Units; the author has served, in the 95th Civil Affairs Brigade (Airborne) and 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) and deployed to Colombia multiple times as part of the Special Operations which is studied through this document.

⁴⁸ Dawson R. Hancock and Bob Algozzine, *Doing Case Study Research* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2011), 402, Kindle.

This study used the resources from the Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC). As stated on their home page⁴⁹ since 1945, “the DTIC has proudly served the United States Development Defense (DOD) community as the largest central resource for DOD and government funded research, development, technical and engineering information. DTIC enables the defense research and development community to maximize the availability, use and collaboration of the almost 4,000,000 technical records resulting from Defense-fund technical activities.”⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Department of Defense, “Defense Technical Information Center,” accessed November 19, 2015, <http://dtic.mil/dtic/>.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Command Structure of Special Forces, Civil Affairs, Military Information Support Operations Case Study and Findings

The United States Joint Publication 1-02 define Special Operation as operations requiring unique modes of employment, tactical techniques, equipment and training often conducted in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments and characterized by one or more of the following: time sensitive, clandestine, low visibility, carried out with and or through indigenous forces, requiring regional expertise, and or a high degree of risk.⁵¹

The USSOF falls under the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). This combatant command is unique and has responsibilities for training, equipment, and employment of special operations across the globe. USSOCOM is the “lead” combatant command synchronizing planning for global special operations against terrorist networks.⁵² When directed by the United States Secretary of Defense (SECDEF), USSOCOM may also conduct special operations missions as a supported command.⁵³

⁵¹ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, November 8, 2010, as amended through February 15, 2016), accessed November 19, 2015, http://dtic.mil//doctrine/new_pubs/jp1_02.pdf.

⁵² Joint Special Operations University, *United States Special Operations Reference Manual* (Tampa, FL: JSOU Press, 2014), I 2-6.

⁵³ Ibid.

The United States Army Special Operations Forces (USSOF) provide a comprehensive approach to unified land operations, also provides combatant commanders and the United States Ambassadors discreet, precise, and scalable services that integrate military operations with other activities.⁵⁴ The USSOF is composed of three military occupational specialties (MOS). The units are the Special Forces or as commonly know the green berets. Special Operations Civil Affairs (SOFCA) and Military Information Support Operations (MISO).

The Army Doctrine Publication 3-05 mentioned of the USSOF operate in a world that is dangerous and poses a different threat to stability. Places that are controlled by communist guerrillas and criminal organization. These two entities have the same interest, usually to make a profit on anything possible. The problem is they foster an extreme environment in which the population gets enslaved, and the threat to a legitimate government's agencies is present. These threats are complex and usually yield an outcome that's hard to predict. In that "space" is where USSOF continuously operate.

General (Retired) Charles Cleveland wrote, "The role of United States Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) in the U.S. Army's operating concept to Shape operational environments in the countries and regions of consequence, Prevent conflict through the application of special operations and conventional deterrence, and when necessary help Win our nation's wars. It will outline ARSOF's requirement to provide in the nation's defense unequalled Surgical Strike and Special Warfare capabilities. Together these two different but mutually supporting forms of special operations comprise the American Way of Special Operations Warfighting."⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Department of the Army, "Army Doctrine Publication 3-05, *Special Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), accessed April 13, 2016, <http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine>.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

The United States Army Special Operations Command train and send special operations Soldiers to the USSOCOM.⁵⁶ These forces include the Special Forces (SF), Rangers, Civil Affairs (CA), and Military Information Support Operations (MISO). These troops are available for deployment in support of the combatant commands.⁵⁷

The command structure is represented in figure 2.

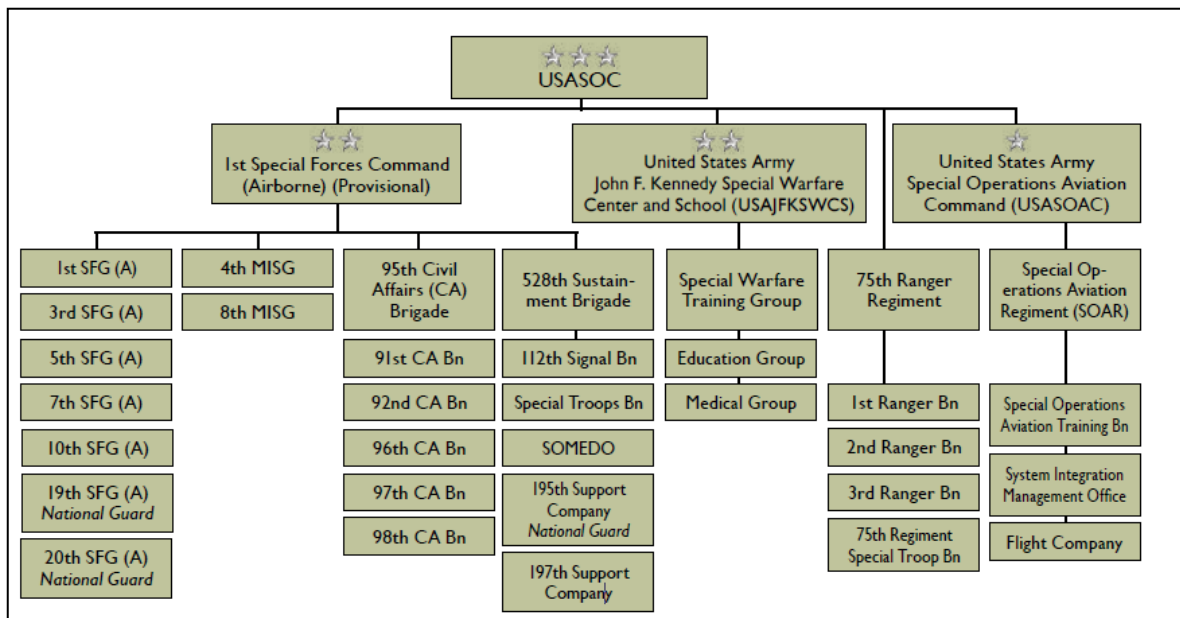


Figure 2. The United States Army Special Operations Command Structure

Source: Department of Defense, *United States Special Operations Reference Manual*, 2015, accessed: January 6, 2016, http://jsou.socom.mil/JSOU%20Publications/2015SOFRefManual_fina_cc.pdf, 3-1.

⁵⁶ Joint Special Operations University, *United States Special Operations Reference Manual*, 3-1 – 3-13.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 25.

For this research, the author focused on the units subordinate to the First Special Forces Command (Airborne) (Provisional) [1st SFC (A) (P)] which are CA, SF, MISO. Those units have been operating in the Western Hemisphere advancing the United States interest through military engagements.⁵⁸

The First Special Forces Command (Airborne) (Provisional) encompass the Special Forces Regiment, Psychological Operations Regiment, the 95th Civil Affairs Brigade (CA BDE) and the 528th Sustainment Brigade.⁵⁹

The Special Operation Civil Affairs (CA) under the 95th CA BDE is organized, trained to conduct civil affairs operations (CAO) in any part of the world..⁶⁰ Civil Affairs Operations is defined as actions planned, executed by civil affairs forces enhancing the awareness and managing the civilians in the operational environment.⁶¹ This unit identifies, mitigate causes of instability in an assigned region.⁶² “Other tasks are to provide functional skills that usually a civilian government is responsible for. CA forces also establish relations with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), indigenous

⁵⁸ Ibid., 25.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 3-18.

⁶⁰ Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication 3-05, *Special Operations*, Glossary-1.

⁶¹ Joint Chiefs of Staff, JP 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*.

⁶² Ibid.

population and institutions to prevent conflict and more significant share a common vision and joint efforts towards a common goal.”⁶³

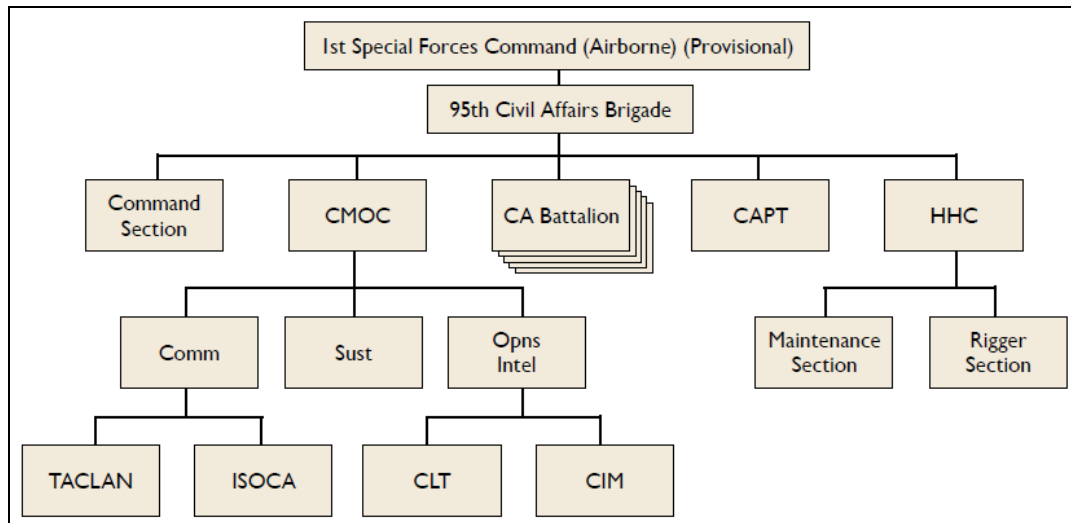


Figure 3. 95th Civil Affairs Brigade

Source: Department of Defense, *United States Special Operations Reference Manual*, 2015, accessed: January 6, 2016, http://jsou.socom.mil/JSOU%20Publications/2015SOFRefManual_fina_cc.pdf, 3-16.

According to the researcher’s experience through multiple deployments in the Western Hemisphere and the Middle East the other force who works or collaborate with Civil Affairs Forces is the Military Information Support Elements. These two forces are part of Special Operations in an austere environment unifying forces towards a common goal. MISO use information focused on foreign population or other foreign forces with

⁶³ United States Army, *Civil Affairs in Unconventional Warfare* (Lexington: Government Printing Office, 2014), 21-29.

the purpose of influencing their behavior.⁶⁴ Always the ultimate goal of the MISO is to influence, conduct and modify the audience behavior in favor of the Combatant Command or the United States.⁶⁵

The MISO and CA collaborate always under the non-lethal proponent in the Combatants Command adding a capacity in which the use of force to modify the will to fight the enemy is not needed. Moreover, mitigate the grievances of a group in which terrorist or criminal organizational are exploiting. This forces compelled the enemy or a population without lethal force.

The last of the forces belonging to First Special Forces Command (Airborne) (Provisional) is the Special Forces or commonly known as the “Green Berets.”⁶⁶ These Soldiers are selected through a process in which each candidate is screen through, subsequently trained a John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School in Fort Bragg, NC. Here they get specialized training guided towards Unconventional Warfare.⁶⁷

The Special Forces are divided into Groups, Battalion, Companies and ultimate Special Forces Operational Detachment Alphas or SFODAs. These are the operational elements of the regiment. The Special Forces has a variety of task assigned by the

⁶⁴ Department of Defense, *United States Special Operations Reference Manual*, 2015, accessed: January 6, 2016, http://jsou.socom.mil/JSOU%20Publications/2015SOFRefManual_fina_cc.pdf.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Joint Special Operations University, *United States Special Operations Reference Manual*, 1-1 – 1-8.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

Secretary of Defense.⁶⁸ These tasks are: primary, conduct Unconventional Warfare when directed and they also the capability of conducting Foreign Internal Defense, Counter terrorism, non-proliferation of WMD, Direct Action, Special Reconnaissance, support to information Operations when directed.⁶⁹

Special Operations Forces Groups organization chart is below.

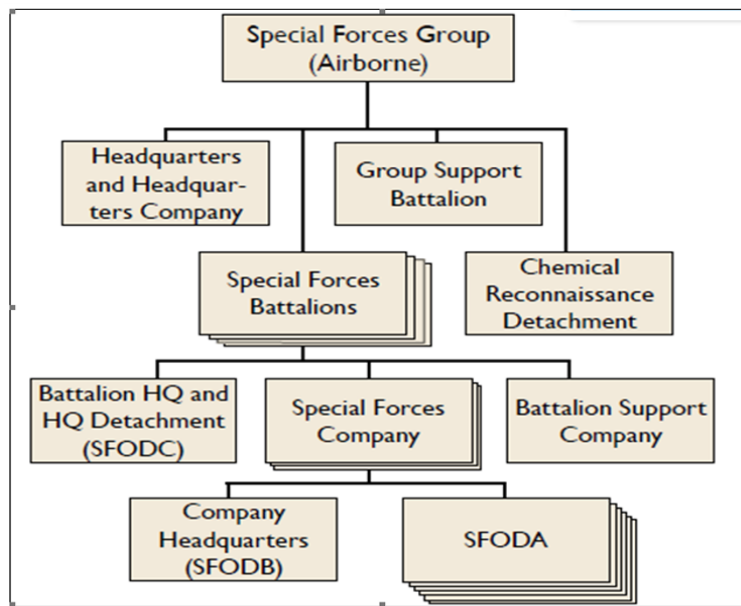


Figure 4. Special Forces Groups Command Structure

Source: Department of Defense, *United States Special Operations Reference Manual*, 2015, accessed: January 6, 2016, http://jsou.socom.mil/JSOU%20Publications/2015SOFRefManual_fina_cc.pdf, 3-3.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 3-3.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

These forces had one core activity in common which is to conduct Foreign Internal Defense (FID) in other countries.⁷⁰ This activity is defined as “the participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs are taken by another government or other designated organization, to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to their security.”⁷¹

These three units, MISO, CA, and SF work together constantly in support of the Colombian Security Strategy to support the Colombian Government to continue stabilizing the country. FID will take a more critical function in Colombia once the peace agreement is signed. The focus of FID is to build the partner or host nation capacity so that they can resolve their security internal problems without assistance from other nations. The researcher believes based on his experiences in Colombian and Peru that this is the most recommended way to build a nation. The support provided to Colombia by the United States and the conduction of FID yielded good results. The road has been long and not easy for the Colombian State.

Through FID, the USSOF has supported Colombian not only with the military, but also in conjunction with the US Department of State who have been supporting the “Unidad Administrativa de Consolidacion Territorial” (Territorial Consolidation

⁷⁰ Joint Special Operations University, *United States Special Operations Reference Manual*, 1-6.

⁷¹ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-22, *Foreign Internal Defense* (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2010), accessed March 6, 2016, http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp3_22.pdfhttp://dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp3_22.pdf, ix.

Administrative Unit in English).⁷² The effort has been also through interagency operations with other Colombian agencies. Through FID the United States allows the host nation, in this case, Colombia to be in the lead and the US only assist in the building of the security forces capacity this way Colombia can maintain legitimacy in the eyes of the population. In the last fifty years in which the United States has been assisting Colombia, the researcher can say that the program yielded results. More research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of FID in Colombia, but the researcher believes that the FARC in Cuba negotiating peace is the best indicator that FID had been working over the decades.

The researcher has seen through his deployments to the Andean Ridge Area since 2008 through 2015 the progress made by the Colombian Security Forces with the assistance of the United States. The Colombian security forces due to their professionalism and results reached in the war against the FARC, the US Embassy in Peru through the Special Operations Liaison Officer organized a trilateral conference. Peru hosted this conference with the assistance of the United States. During the conference, Colombia, Peru, and the United States shared lessons learned in operations against insurgencies, information operations, and civil-military operations throughout the national territory. Through FID Colombia has been turned from a consumer of security to an exporter of the same.

Joint Combined Exchange Training and other cooperation's programs have executed the conduct of FID by the United States in Colombia. These programs will not

⁷² Gobierno de Colombia, "Unidad Administrativa de Consolidación Territorial," accessed February 15, 2016, <http://www.consolidacion.gov.co/?q=content/unidad-administrativa-para-la-consolidaci%C3%B3n-territorial-uact>.

be discussed in this research. The problem is the current command and control structure of USSOF, should be rearranged to combat more efficiently the transnational organized crime groups in the Andean Region, especially after the FARC and the Colombian government reach a peace accord. This peace accord is expected to be reached during 2016. The United States and the Colombian Government continue to plan a mitigation strategy for the uncertainty of demobilized FARC members and the possible rise of criminal activity in the country.

The involvement in Colombian dated back to 1958 when “President, Alberto Lleras Camargo, sought internal security assistance from the United States. In response to this request, the Eisenhower administration assembled a Special Survey Team to investigate Colombia’s internal security situation.”⁷³ This Survey Team was under the US Department of State with the support of the Department of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency. The team was composed of specialists in irregular warfare and with experience in Europe, Asia and Latin America.⁷⁴ Two years later, the team organized, by President Eisenhower completed their first report delineating the problems of bandits and potential violence pretreated by communist guerrillas.⁷⁵ Also cited the Colombian Government of the time to be unable to respond to the situation.

For this research the author will divide the time into three phases, which are considered important. These periods are: “La Violencia” (the violence) from approximated 1945 through 1966, Plan Colombia from 1999 – approximate 2006,

⁷³ Rempe, “The Past as Prologue a History of U S Counterinsurgency.”

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

Colombian Strategic Development Initiative (CSDI) or Consolidation from 2007 to present.

“La Violencia” with the division of the Liberal party under the direction of Alberto Lleras Camargo, subsequently losing its power to the Conservatives under the direction of Mariano Ospina Pérez.⁷⁶ In 1948, presidential candidate Gaitan was assassinated during his presidential campaign.⁷⁷ This event was called the “Bogotazo”.⁷⁸ According to documents a crowd sized the killer and killed him in the front of the presidential palace, this sparked uncontrolled violence with 1400 people dead in about 48 hours.⁷⁹ Liberal and Conservative sympathizers organized into groups through rural areas to protect themselves against attacks from each side.⁸⁰ In 1958 the United States started to cooperate with Colombia, building the security forces for internal defense, thus bringing stability to the nation.⁸¹ This approach between both nations ended La Violencia promoting stability to that nation, but the grievances persisted.⁸²

In 1999, the Pastrana administration requested assistance to the United States as a result due to their economic crisis.⁸³ The United States responded providing substantial

⁷⁶ Rempe, “The Past as Prologue a History of U S Counterinsurgency.”

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Davis et al., Preface xxiii-xxxviii.

assistance to build the Colombian capabilities in the fight against narco-trafficking, subsequently expanding the reach of the Colombian state into previously contested areas.⁸⁴ This way the Colombian government expanded their reach to parts of the country not reach before by the state, subsequently stretching the local government, promoting economic opportunities and lastly promoting the respect for human rights.⁸⁵

The United States continued their cooperation under President Alvaro Uribe's administration, and Uribe's administration promised to continue with the strategy started by President Pastrana.⁸⁶ In 2002, Uribe's administration designed a strategy to weaken illegal armed groups through the country.⁸⁷ The same year the United States Congress recognizing the nexus between the drug trade and the illicit narcotics trafficking expanded the authorities, thus making the United States aid more flexible to support President Uribe Strategy.⁸⁸ These new authorities also had an effect on the number of advisors authorized in the country. United States Special Operations increased their numbers in the role of advisors. The results were the following "Attacks conducted by illegally armed groups against rural towns decreased by 91% from 2002 to 2005.

⁸⁴ Embassy of the United States, Bogota, Columbia, "Plan Colombia," accessed April 13, 2016, <http://bogota.usembassy.gov/plancolombia.html>.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

Between 2002 and 2008, Colombia saw a decrease in homicides by 44%, kidnappings by 88%, terrorist attacks by 79%, and attacks on the country's infrastructure by 60%.”⁸⁹

In January 2007, Colombia adopted a new Strategy, consolidating the gains obtained by Plan Colombia,⁹⁰ this plan is known as the National Consolidation Plan.⁹¹ The strategy was a civilian led through the whole of government approach.

Since 2007, nearly \$570 million have been invested only in socio-economic and humanitarian assistance to Colombia. On November 17, 2009, Ambassador William R. Brownfield and Minister of Foreign Affairs Jaime Bermudez signed a new multi-year Country Assistance Agreement with the Government of Colombia, with first-year funding of nearly \$212 million. The agreement brings continuity to the socio-economic and humanitarian assistance that the U.S. Government implements in the country.⁹²

The result of the long term strategy has yielded good results as we mentioned before. To the author, the most important gain is the Colombian Government expansion to previously neglected areas and the increased capacity of the Colombian Security Forces under the advice of the United States Advisors. Through the long term strategy the FARC was diminished not only in combat but also the Colombian Government addressed the grievances of the population that were the root causes of instability.

As we have seen the involvement of the United States advisors mostly United States Special Forces has been since the adoption of Plan Colombia. The involvement

⁸⁹ Ibid., 34.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Embassy of the United States, Bogota, Columbia, “Bilateral Topics,” accessed April 13, 2016, <http://bogota.usembassy.gov/bilateral-topics.html>.

mostly has been to develop the security forces capacity in order to Colombia be able to deal the problem. This approach yielded good results.

The Command and Control Strucutre used during Plan Colombia is depicted in the figure 5.

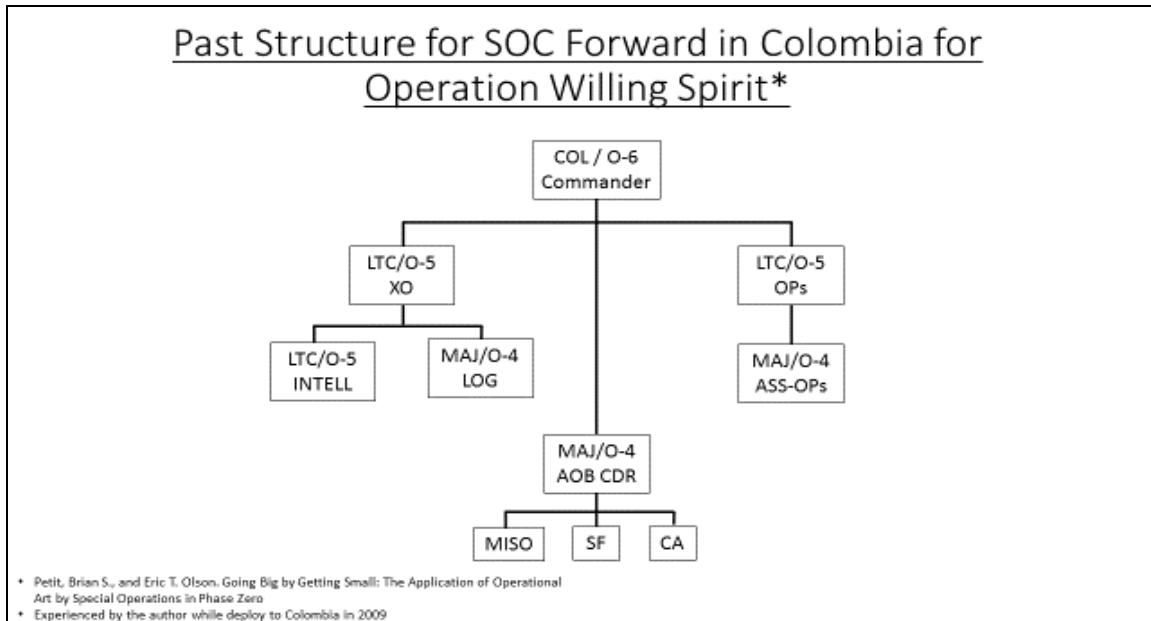


Figure 5. Special Operations Command Structure during Operation Willing Spirit

Source: Brian S. Petit and Eric T. Olson, *Going Big by Getting Small, The application of Operational Art by Special Operations in Phase Zero* (Denver, CO: Outskirts Press, 2013), and the experience of the author through his deployment to Colombia in 2009.

After the rescue of the hostages in Colombia under the command and structure depicted in figure 5, the structure changed to a more lean or reduced structure.

The current structure is portrayed in figure6.

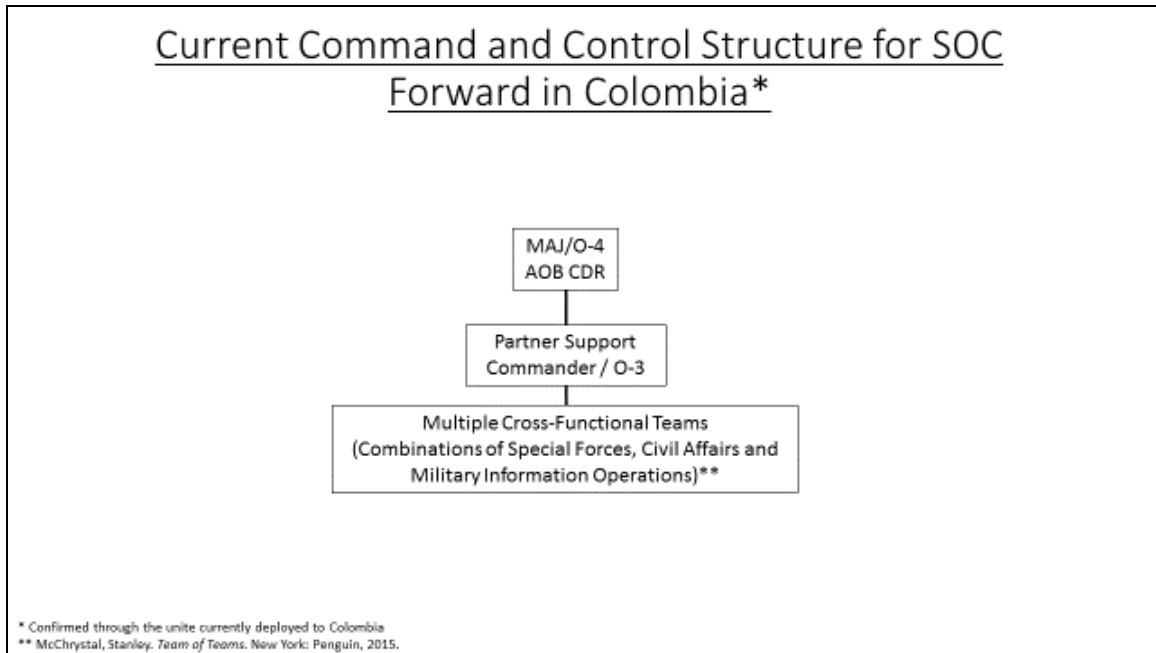


Figure 6. Current Command and Control Structure for Special Operations Command Forward in Colombia.

Source: Stanley McChrystal, *Team of Teams* (New York, Penguin, 2015), Confirmed through the unit currently deployed to Colombia.

One of the key findings is a lessons learned from Operations Anaconda in which is mention the “long distance leadership” of General Franks, CENTCOM Commander through the battle.⁹³ Very similar to the current command and control structure in Colombia in which a junior field grade officer function as a representative of the Special Operations. In the next chapter will recommend a better structure used in the past.

⁹³ Marzano, “Criticism Associated with Operation Anaconda.”

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As the United States and Colombian Government waits for the peace agreements to be signed on or about the summer of 2016. The United States Special Operations Command South should plan for the changes coming ahead in the operational environment.

The researcher question was should the current command and control structure of USSOF be rearranged to combat more efficiently the transnational organized crime groups in the Andean Region, especially after the FARC and the Colombia government reach a peace accord? This question was based on the previous experience of the demobilization of the “paramilitares” during the Alvaro Uribe presidency. On that specific case, some of the demobilized “paramilitares” turned into criminal bands or bandas criminales combined with narcotraffickers.⁹⁴

The researcher believes through his investigation that a more influencing command structure is needed in the Andean Ridge Region. This structure needs to be able to coordinate with the US Embassy in Colombia as well as the Colombian Government, especially the Minister of Defense. As of now a Major (O-4) is the Advance Operating Base – Andean Ridge Commander. His office is located in Bogota, Colombia and is in charge of all Special Operations throughout the region. This is great responsibility, especially with what is expected in the future if the peace accord is signed.

⁹⁴ Insight Crime, “BACRIM Vuelve a Sus Raíces Paramilitares En La Lucha Por La Tierra En Colombia,” accessed April 13, 2016, <http://es.insightcrime.org/analisis/bacrim-se-vuelve-a-sus-raices-paramilitares-en-la-batalla-por-la-tierra-de-colombia>.

Many questions still unanswered or need more research for example, if the security cooperations program are going to change? Alternatively, the Colombian Government is going to change his posture towards the United States once the reintegrated ex-FARC members join the political arena as expected. The lectors have to remember the United States has been supporting Colombia in the fight of this terrorist group for last fifty years, and the FARC talking points always have been to demonize the United States assistance in the country. The United States remain loyal to the Colombian Government since the inception of Plan Colombia during the Pastrana-Clinton administrations followed by Busch-Uribe.

On February 5, 2016, President Obama said he would ask the US Congress for 450 million dollars in aid to help the Colombian Government end the fifty year conflict and implement the peace accords.⁹⁵ If the peace accords are signed and US Congress approves the funding, seem likely for the efforts to change. Most of the funding will go to fight the drug trade, demining and re-educating, re-integrating the former FARC members into society.⁹⁶

The researcher was able to travel to the Southern Command from 28 February to 5 March 2016 and meet with the operations officer. The researcher asked if the relation will be affected by the peace agreement? The answer was the focus of the United States will be in assisting Colombian to Disarm, Demobilize and Re-Integrate the former FARC

⁹⁵ Roerta Rampton, "Obama Pledges More than \$450 Million Aid to Help Colombia Peace Plan," *Reuters*, February 5, 2016, accessed April 13, 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-colombia-idUSKCN0VD2XM>.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

members, also demining. The Southern Command Response is aligned with President Obama's administration policy toward the region.

For the reasons above the researcher considered and concluded the Special Operations Command Structure needs to be modified in the Andean Ridge Region. Assisting the US Department of Justice in the fight against the drug trade and all their connected crimes will be a challenge in itself. Also, the United State Department of State will have a bigger role through the United States Agency for International Development in the reintegration and development in the rural areas where most of the FARC fighters are from.

The researcher was deployed to Colombia in 2009 as Deputy Commander of the Advance Operating Base – Colombia. During the researcher's tenure in Colombia an organization named Special Operations Command Forward was in place. That structure was commanded by a Colonel (O-6) and a small joint staff in the US Embassy. They used to coordinate all of the Special Operations Efforts with the US Embassy and the Colombian Military at the Minister of Defense level. The researcher found that the Special Operations Command Forward was initiated by the Brigadier General (BG) Charles Cleveland.⁹⁷ BG Cleveland saw the need for a structure at the operational level able to manage, synchronize the cooperation programs in Colombia.⁹⁸ This was an effort in support of Operation Willing Spirit, the rescue of the US Hostages in Colombia.⁹⁹ The structure worked very well on the task assigned; they were very persuasive and no

⁹⁷ Petit and Olson, *Going Big by Getting Small*, 131.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

invasive in the coordination and synchronization of special operation jointly with the Colombian Government and the United States Embassy in Colombia in a true Joint Interagency Intergovernmental Multinational effort.¹⁰⁰

If the peace agreement is signed and the United States President receives the funding, the researcher believes the Special Operations Command in Colombia needs to be modified to that proven structure. New challenges will arise, perhaps new advisors like Civil Affairs and MISO will increase, perhaps the whole operation will focus on narco trafficking and reintegration instead of fighting the FARC remnants. The future will dictate the course to follow.

The new structure recommended is similar to the previous Special Operations Forward, in which was commanded by a Colonel (O-6) and his small staff consisted of the following proponents: intelligence, logistic, and operations. They should be the synchronizing agent between the Colombian Government, US Embassy, and the US Special Operations. As the researcher experiences, new SOC Forward (SOC-F) should have the “reach back” mechanism to SOCSOUTH or Southern Command for capabilities needed during the new phase “Peace Colombia”.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Rampton, “Obama Pledges More than \$450 Million Aid to Help Colombia Peace Plan.”

The new Special Operations Command Structure recommended by the researcher will emulate the the previous. In the chart below is a depiction of it.

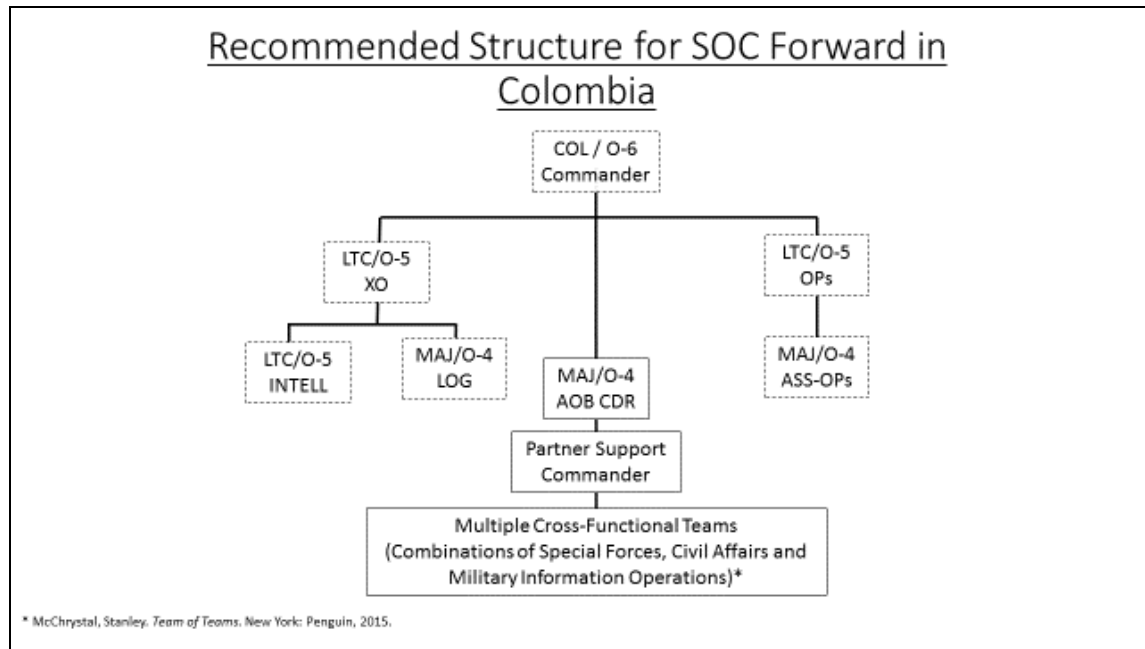


Figure 7. Recommended SOC Forward Command Structure

Source: Created by the author based on his experience in Colombia, 2008.

The specialty or branch of the recommended SOC Forward Commander military occupational skill needs more research. It should be based on tasks assigned, what is the focus of the United States Southern Command in Colombia, perhaps can be civil affairs, information operations, military information support operations or special forces. In reality, it does not matter what specialty is the commander, but needs to be definitely a member of United States Special Operations Command South to better orchestrate the operations between special operators and the agencies, US and Colombian.

The secondary questions are:

1. Must the US-Colombia military engagement agreements be modified? Based on the research an uncertain future, the researcher will recommend to wait and see the defined new effort by the US Southern Command and the Colombian Government.
2. What lessons learned in Colombia can be applied to the next phase? The re-implementation of the SOC Forward. This will allow the operations to be more synchronized between the Colombian Government, US Embassy, and other agencies as we saw during Operation Willing Spirit.
3. Should USSOF partner with the Colombian Joint Chief of Staff or, who should the USSOF partner with?

For this question, more research is needed, and more in-depth analysis is required.

Perhaps a new operational approach and framing of the new expected problems need to be developed.

4. What would be the right combination for USSOF between CA, MISO, and SF to address the problem?

The definition of the new issue and the new operational approach by the command is required. The researcher recommends waiting for the peace agreement to be signed, and the planners can observe what new the entitlements are granted to the FARC.

The possible influence of the re-installation of the recommended structure can be remarkable. What Colombia needs now is a sustained “whole of government” counterinsurgency effort to consolidate the gains achieved. According to David Kilcullen the Colombian military needs to continue their involvement in governance and

economics with units like “Acción Integral”¹⁰² (integral action). This engagement needs to continue or increase to provide a workable space to the local rural governments, and provide essential services to the local population reducing the grievances that provoke an insurgency.¹⁰³ The researcher believes that the recommended structure will give the USSOF a further reach capability to the United States Southern Command and depth in assisting the Colombian Government. The recommended structure will support the Colombian Government at the National Headquarters to plan and resource, while allowing the tactical units to concentrate in advising the Colombian Operational Units through the country.

A similar structure was used before in the rescue the US hostages in Colombia resulting in Operation Jaque.¹⁰⁴ The operational approach accompanying the recommended USSOF Command Structure should yield good results in the phase Colombian is about to enter. The recommended structure should be accompanied by new strategy if the peace agreements are signed in the summer of 2016. The support and operational depth can be orchestrated in support of FID operations, subsequently continue to build new capacities with the Colombian Armed Forces.

The field that the writer was researching requires more investigation, especially a thorough review of the past lessons learned in the region. There are not enough publications that address this topic. What the researcher knows is that during Plan

¹⁰² Davis et al., 80.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Diálogo, “Operation Jaque Rescued Hostages Relive Their Return to Freedom a Year Later,” July 2, 2009, accessed April 13, 2016, http://dialogo-americas.com/en_GB/articles/rmisa/features/special_reports/2009/07/02/feature-01.

Colombia from 1999 circa 2006, especially after the order for Operation Willing Spirit was signed, the recommended structure was implemented.¹⁰⁵ Around 2009 during the period of Consolidation in which the Colombian Strategic Development Initiative or Consolidation the recommended structure was in place until 2010.¹⁰⁶ In 2011 the recommended structure was eliminated, and replaced by the Advance Operating Base command structure.

The researcher recommends that the United States Command South continue to explore the “modified command and control structure” through time and to see if has been employed in other regions of the world. The search for quantitative data should be paramount in continuation of this research. A comparison of effects, MOEs and MOPs during all three mentioned periods is paramount. The author believes that the lack of resources for research and the constrained timeline limits the data to be collected and analyzed.

¹⁰⁵ Petit and Olson, *Going Big by Getting Small*, 131-132.

¹⁰⁶ Experience of the author while deployed to Colombia from 2011 to 2012.

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